



Written by [Steve Byas](#) on October 7, 2015

Expect More Federal Control of Education with Obama's New Education Chief

President Obama's naming of John B. King, Jr. (shown) to lead the federal Department of Education, replacing Arne Duncan, vividly illustrates not only his philosophy about "education," but also his lack of respect for Congress.



The president will not submit King's name to the Republican-controlled U.S. Senate for confirmation. Instead, King will serve as acting or interim secretary of education. This will avoid Senate committee hearings likely to be contentious over Obama education policies such as Race to the Top, the frequent testing of students, and the controversial Common Core "standards."

This is, of course, an indication of the disrespect Obama holds for the constitutional doctrine of checks and balances, or at least any checks on his power coming from the legislative branch.

Thomas Dee, a professor of education at Stanford, noted this was not new, and it is not all Obama's doing. He placed the blame, at least partly, on the Republicans in Congress, noting that Congress had "essentially ceded power to the executive branch," in surrendering to many of the so-called top-down reforms that have generated much public resistance across the country.

King is expected to continue the policies of his predecessor Arne Duncan, which were an expansion of federal efforts to control the nation's public schools. Duncan offered states waivers from many of the stringent requirements of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law, passed at the urging of Republican President George W. Bush, if states would agree to adopt the policies preferred by Democrat President Barack Obama, such as Common Core.

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Opposition to the education policies of Duncan and Obama came from teachers' unions who did not like tying teacher evaluations to test results, and from Republicans who did not agree with the federal control over public schools, which is historically and constitutionally a state function.

But not all Republicans opposed Duncan. Senator Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.), a former secretary of education, called Duncan "one of the president's best appointments." And, of course, former Florida Governor Jeb Bush has been a supporter of Common Core.

The increased federal control over education is now reaching beyond K-12 schooling. Terry Hartle, of the American Council on Education, noted that many of the Obama-Duncan policies were an effort to impose a "one-sized" solution on America's colleges and universities.

Perhaps nothing sums up the Duncan era at the federal Department of Education better than his response to the growing national opposition to Common Core, when he dismissed those who opposed



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the “standards” as mostly white suburban moms who had “all of a sudden” discovered “their child isn’t as brilliant as they thought they were.”

King is every bit as much an advocate of increased federal control over America’s public schools, and Common Core, as was Duncan. King’s tenure as commissioner of education in New York State provoked widespread criticism throughout the Empire State. The New York State Allies for Public Education (NYSAPE) decried the King appointment as “bad news for the nation.” Eric Mihelbergel, a co-founder of NYSAPE, said that King “helped create an educational disaster” in New York. A NYSAPE parent activist, Lisa Rudley, blamed King for “inappropriate Common Core standards, flawed curriculum, defective exams, and an invalid teacher evaluation” process, which “caused more than 200,000 parents to opt out of the state exams last spring.”

Long Island Opt Out added that King was “notorious for his complete disconnect” from both parents and teachers.

During a “listening tour” of the state, designed to alleviate concerns over Common Core standards implementation, King faced such stiff opposition in Poughkeepsie, New York, that he cancelled the rest of the tour.

Following a storm of controversy, King left his post in New York last year and joined the Obama administration as Duncan’s deputy.

A former social studies teacher, King founded the Roxbury Preparatory charter school, and served as its co-director. Among the strict rules he implemented was a prohibition on talking by students in the hallways between classes. He later founded Uncommon Schools, a public charter school network.

Another point of emphasis for King is integrated and racially diverse schools. “Schools that are integrated better our values as a country,” he has said. Ironically, King’s own New York school system is considered the most segregated school system in the United States.

In 2008, King became a “New Schools Entrepreneurial Leaders for Public Education Fellow” for the Aspen Institute. The Aspen Institute was among the globalist think tanks, such as the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, the Brookings Institution, and the Peterson Institute for International Economics, which lended intellectual support to globalist trade agreements, such as the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) integration efforts.

The influence of the federal government over education has been increasing for decades. A significant increase came in the 1950s with the creation of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare under the administration of “modern Republican” Dwight Eisenhower. An even bigger advance occurred during the Carter administration in 1979, with the creation of a Department of Education. Ronald Reagan made an issue of abolishing the department during his 1980 presidential campaign. When he asked Congress to terminate the department after he took over from Democrat Carter, the Democrat-controlled Congress ignored him, and eventually, for whatever reason, the efforts to end the department ceased.

The next president, George H.W. Bush, not only did not even ask for the department’s abolition, but he ran in 1988 promising to serve as the “education president.” He was followed eight years later by his son, George W. Bush, who was able to get Congress to agree to another expansion of federal control over education with his No Child Left Behind program and its frequent student testing.



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It is very clear that the Obama administration is only interested in expanding the role of the federal government in education even more, not only in elementary and secondary schools, but even into colleges. This is despite the complete lack of constitutional authority for any federal role in education.

Certainly no change can be expected with “Acting” Secretary of Education John King.

Photo: AP Images

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